

## **Southeast PTO Meeting Minutes- November 3, 2014**

**Members in Attendance:** Erin Clark, Erin Christopher, Jon Sgro, Lauren Rodriguez, Mary deVecchis, Amy Dunstan, Jennifer Mott, Jana MacDonald, Noreen Halbrooks, Patty Braithwaite, Esther Soffer-Roberts

Erin Clark called the meeting to order at 6:35pm

### **Discussion of Upcoming Events**

**Election Day Bake Sale-** Scheduled for Tuesday November 4<sup>th</sup> at the Mansfield Library. Thank you to all that baked for this fundraiser event.

**Literacy Night-** Thursday November 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. The PTO is sponsoring the storyteller, Carolyn Stearns. America Reads will also be there. Southeast's Amanda Doyle is organizing this.

**Thanksgiving Bake Sale-** November 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and possibly 26<sup>th</sup>. Flyers will be coming out soon. Donated baked goods will be sold at parent pick up time on the half days as well as the parent/ conference time. If goods are still available they will be sold during the last parent pick up time on Wednesday Nov 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Uconn Book Fair-** November 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Mary Ann Olson is coordinating this event. It will be held in the library and the PTO will be looking for volunteers. There will also be staff from the Coop to help this year as well. There is a preview day on the 21st.

**Cocoa, Caroling and Crafts-** Volunteers needed to set this up. Mary deVecchis suggested taking out the caroling part and move the event to January then holiday conflicts will be avoided. Also, the ideas for the crafts to represent other countries, or New Year's celebrations along with the night called "Cocoa and Cultural Crafts" as a possible title were all suggested. There are 32 different countries represented at Southeast. Members will brainstorm and there will be a future email.

**Adopt a Family-** Erin Clark and Jess Higham have volunteered for this. Lauren said the town has identified families in need so Erin Clark will connect with the town office soon.

**Game Night-** Noreen Halbrooks has done this in the past, usually in February on a Friday night and there have been 30-40 in attendance in the past. The event might have to be arranged around trestle tree which is scheduled for Jan/February. Our understanding is that it is easier to break down equipment if necessary during the first few weeks of trestle tree. We will avoid Valentines's Day weekend so February 20<sup>th</sup> is a possibility or maybe in March?

**Pancake Breakfast at Applebee's** – February 28<sup>th</sup> 8-10am. We will do this event so we need about 5 adult volunteers and 15-20 kids, Tickets will be \$5-6 and the PTO pays about \$1.50 a ticket. Patty Braithwaite has done this event for other groups and reports that it is a lot of fun and kids do a lot of the work. It is also profitable to sell tickets to those that may not come.

**Family Skate-** Erin Christopher contacted the Superintendent's office. We have to go through an attorney for liability issues for Uconn and this is expensive. The Board of Ed pays for this part but the PTO pays \$350 for the Uconn ice time. Bolton ice rink only offers 7:30-9pm. Their price is \$381 an hour but in April you can get the rink earlier in the day for cheaper. Ron a Roll is \$425 for two hours and we have to guarantee we will have 50 people. Last year there was about 50-75 people who attended the family skate event. Do we do a 3 school option? Or do we just informally have people attend open skate on a day/time but then families have to pay? Or does the PTO pay for the event regardless? Do we do roller skating instead and it's a reduced price for families? We will get more information and email and revisit via email.

**March Basketball game-** Do we do this again? This will be explored.

**Thanksgiving Feast-** Friday November 21<sup>st</sup>. A notice was in Friday folders. Servers are in demand for this event. There may be Aspire sessions after the feast.

**Officer Reports- Treasurer's Report-Amy Dunstan-** Money continues to be raised for the Fisher family. The PTO raised \$4,288 from the silent auction portion of the carnival. Tickets sales and the bake sale raised \$717.71. The PTO goal was to raise \$5000 from the carnival events and our total was \$5005.

PTO meeting minutes from September were reviewed. Noreen Halbrooks made a motion to accept them and Erin Christopher seconded this motion.

Also Lena Rossi recently resigned as Co- PTO Secretary but Jennifer Mott will continue as Secretary. Jana MacDonald has offered to be the substitute secretary at the January 5, 2015 meeting as Jennifer Mott informed the PTO she will not be able to attend that meeting.

### **Principal's Report- Lauren Rodriguez**

**Teacher of the Year Celebration-** Children collected "WOW" fuzzy balls and dumped them on Mrs. Labella's head as part of the school wide assembly to celebrate Mrs. Labella as Mansfield's Teacher of the Year. Kids also made books, shared memories, etc. Lauren is proud of all the staff and students who made the recognition a success. They were very supportive and there was also a nice community celebration at the Board of Education meeting.

**December Board of Education meeting-** Southeast will be hosting this on December 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm. There will be time dedicated for the PTO to share events/information as well as for Southeast to highlight students, events, etc. Overall there will be about 15-20 minutes allotted for this.

**Promoting Aspire-** Aspire is one of Southeast's goals. Lauren is wondering if it is appropriate to have an Aspire session available after the Thanksgiving feast. The survey is designed to get to know families and 10-12 people have been involved. Kindergarten teachers are reaching out to parents for Aspire sessions and sessions will be available in the computer lab on Monday Nov 24<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday Nov 25<sup>th</sup>.

The issue of each teacher directly reaching out to classroom parents to do Aspire was discussed. Also questions made by Esther about whether there will be an actual invitation to a parent afterwards to become involved or will some parents not be invited and how that will be received were all raised. Lauren may bring this topic up to the staff. Some people may still not understand what Aspire is and doing group sessions can be more productive. There is a data collection piece to it. The timing of sessions is an issue as both day and night sessions have been offered but there has been poor attendance. Would sign up sheets be helpful? There seems to be a need to communicate again what Aspire is. There was a suggestion made to have classroom teachers help with this but is it best to do it by class? A suggestion was made to try hosting nights by grade. Esther suggested utilizing a Doodle Poll(doodle.com)online- parents can indicate when they are available and then sessions can be offered based on this feedback. Should incentives be attached as well? For example, if a parent sign ups then get a ticket is issued and their child(ren) get to do something

**Professional Development Day-** Monday November 10<sup>th</sup>. Teachers will be focusing on the Lucy Calkins Writing Workshop model because Southeast will be making this part of the curriculum.

**SRBI-** There are 30 minutes sessions Monday-Thursday devoted to instruction for all kids and all levels. Letters were sent home to explain this. There are different levels of support for various skills- some students can get both enrichment and extra support for different skills. Ms. Carr and Ms. Parker have been involved doing activities. For example Ms. Parker did a Sports Illustrated task for writing. The small group design has really been helpful for kids. SRBI is for kindergarteners as well, each student is in a skill group. They switch groups every 6 weeks and letters will go home in a few weeks.

## **Other Topics for Discussion**

**School Pictures-** Do we want to sign a 2 year contract with Lifetouch? Mixed reviews, Mary deVecchis said Lifetouch is very good with the kids. Patty Braithwaite has always been conduit of info between school and company. When we were not happy with Lifetouch and we switched the other company was worse. This year the photographer was late. Yes, we will change and try a new company called Coffee Pond. Darlene Murphy will be the contact person for Southeast. Vinton uses Coffee Pond and they get a 13% “scholarship” from Coffee Pond for those in need of financial assistance. Vinton likes them but they have fewer choices for a background. Vinton has used them for 4 years and they do outdoor pictures and there are class pictures for all regardless of package. Coffee Pond gives less of a percentage to the PTO for pictures. This year Southeast made \$696 from Lifetouch. A question of whether family portraits could be an option and should we offer this? Scheduling would be an issue.

**Mansfield Advocates for Children(MAC) and Youth Services** are looking for someone to serve as a Youth Services liaison. This person would join MAC and be a link between SE community/families and Youth Services. The person will attend MAC meetings and be our Southeast representative. MAC offers several services including therapy, groups, mentoring, in school programs, food pantry, arts, athletics, mentoring, etc. Please email Erin Christopher if interested.

**Student Directory-** School directories went home and thank you to those that helped compile this information.

**Upcoming Enrichment Presentation-** Louanne Cooley, a Southeast Parent has informed us that the owner of Horizon Wings which does the Birds of Prey program would be happy to come to Southeast to do a presentation and show a bird that ties in with our school logo. This could be part of our spirit week in April. The fee would be \$300 and would be supported by the PTO’s enrichment account. The PTO has already paid for Biomes and 4<sup>th</sup> grade primitive technologies. A discussion about Horizon Wings will take place at the next meeting.

**Citrus orders-** Patty Braithwaite reported that we made the minimum to place an order and ordering online was a new option this year. There was a minor glitch and 18 people did not designate which school should be the recipient of the percentage so Patty can email the other 2 schools to see if they recognize names. If not then we may just split the money three ways if it is ok with other PTO/PTA groups. Erin Christopher, Erin Clark and Lauren offered to make phone calls with Patty to try and get a resolution.

**BJ’s-** Southeast gets \$5 of for each renewal membership a parent makes.

**October PTO morning meeting-** The first morning PTO meeting was held in October and was attended by about 5-7 people. This is a new meeting time option offered in lieu of the regular monthly meetings held at night. There was an idea presented to do a Watermelon social in September instead of an ice cream social. This can alleviate problems with food allergies.

Erin Clark adjourned the meeting at 7:55pm

Respectfully submitted by,

Jennifer Mott, Southeast PTO Secretary